

# VILLAGE OF GRANVILLE

P.O. BOX 208 – 51 QUAKER STREET

GRANVILLE, NEW YORK 12832

Telephone (518)642-2640

Fax (518)642-2460

[www.granvillenyvillage.com](http://www.granvillenyvillage.com)

*Founded in 1870 – Incorporated in 1885*

*Center of the Roofing Slate Industry*

*Home of Telescope Casual Furniture, Co.*

*and Saint Gobain-Performance Plastics*

## OFFICIALS

July 11, 2019

PAUL LABAS  
Mayor

Act 250 Commission

Attention: Study Committee

GORDON SMITH  
Deputy Mayor

Vermont State House

115 State Street

DEAN HYATT  
Trustee

Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

STEPHANIE MUNGER  
Trustee

Dear Commission Members,

HEATHER PAUQUETTE  
Trustee

The Vermont section of the Vermont-New York Slate mining district is a narrow belt located between the New York/Vermont state line and runs in a line from the South near Rupert and continues in a Northerly direction into and slightly beyond Castleton Vt. The industry as whole has been the life blood for my Village here on the New York side of the border for nearly 200 years. The Village Granville NY received its name as the Slate Capital of the world in the late 1800's. It is very ironic however that there is not one slate quarry in the Village of Granville. The reason for our "claim to fame" is the fact that all of the Slate produced in the Slate Valley of Vermont from the late 1800's through the 1960's was brought to our Village to be shipped out on the rail line that once ran through the center of our town to be delivered for use worldwide, and therefore most of the major Slate office buildings for the Vermont quarries were constructed here in Granville. The trucking industry was the demise of the railroad in our area and now mostly all of the slate produced in the Slate Valley of Vermont is shipped by truck.

RICHARD H. ROBERTS  
Clerk & Treasurer  
Registrar

GEORGE JOHNSON  
Supt. of Public Works

ROGER FORANDO  
Village Justice

ERNEST BASSETT, JR.  
Chief of Police

CHRISTINA HALDT  
Planning Board Chairwoman

MOLLY CELANI  
Zoning Board of Appeals

The Slate industry of Vermont was and is still today one of my towns major employers. Immigrants from Wales, Slovakia, Poland, Italy and other countries came here in the late 1800's to work in the slate industry of Vermont and settled in towns dotted along the Vermont/New York border near the quarries. I myself am a third generation slate maker and owner of slate quarries in Vermont, my grandparents came to Vermont in 1893 to live and work in the Slate Valley. Countless numbers of families and employees depend on the Slate industry in Vermont as it is an integral part of the daily lives for the people that live, play, and work here.

Many other local family businesses have been established in our area because of the slate industry in Vermont. We work hand in hand with the municipalities across the border in the Slate Valley on a daily basis, as a matter of fact our local volunteer fire and rescue services responds to emergency calls to our neighbors on the Vermont side of the border on a regular basis. You must understand that we see the border between our two States as a separation of governments and not the people. We who live in the Slate Valley and work the land, care for it and nurture it because it is our heritage and life blood that has provided sustainability for the area and families for almost 200 years now.

My community is in fear of the rumors of the repeal of the Act 250 exemption for the Slate Quarries in the state of Vermont. Time and again the quarries have helped my community with donations to our museums, roads, building projects, schools, and scholarship monies just to name a few, let alone providing jobs to hundreds of people on both sides of the border. I know the industry is struggling to survive as it is. The federal and state environmental guidelines that the quarries in Vermont are mandated to follow are already very strict, and the MSHA, VOSHA, and OSHA laws that are in place to assure the safest working conditions for the employees are costly but welcomed. I want to assure you that the few quarry owners/operators that are left in the state of Vermont value the condition and use of their land immensely because like many of the family owned farms in Vermont (which are dwindling) the quarries have been passed down from generation to generation and all of us here in the Valley want to see the industry continue and thrive for our children's children to be able to live, work and play here.

There is a very rich history here in southern Vermont built with pride by local workers in the Slate industry. The repeal of the act 250 exemption would devastate the industry and our local economy on both sides of the border. When the exemption was granted in the 1995 Grandfathering existing slate quarries the Slate community in this area breathed a huge sigh of relief because of the fear of the financial cost to comply with yet another State mandate. The slate industry has been here in Vermont for almost 200 years, it is most likely the smallest mining industry in the State that provides a living for hundreds of people and has a major economic and human profile for both New York and Vermont State. I ask that you look at this situation carefully and listen to the people that have lived and worked here for generations. I invite you to come to our Slate Valley Museum and experience what the Slate industry of Vermont has done for local communities, Schools, Churches and businesses in your State and in mine. Imagine a State building a museum in honor of an industry from another state? We did it, and it is well attended.

My town would not exist if the Slate industry was not established here in Southern Vermont, and I can assure you that if the industry suffers a crippling blow like the repeal of the act 250 exemption, that many of our beloved neighbors in Vermont like Wells, West Pawlet, Poultney, Fair Haven, Castleton, etc. will suffer a huge economic loss as well. Property values will drop, supporting business will close, tax bases will be reduced, and people will be forced to leave. The lights from a thriving community will be dimmed forever and the end of a historical skilled thriving industry for Vermont will gone. I ask that your commission considers the actions made with extreme due diligence into the end result. Our lives here in the Slate Valley will be directly affected by your decisions in Montpelier. Thank You for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Labas  
Mayor, Granville, NY